

(gaySI)

The Gay Desi

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(gaysi)

: It was a cold February afternoon when I first met The Girl. Three months later, my then husband & I decided to end what was left of our very unhappy marriage.

Those three months and several months that followed were the months that showed me what I was made of. I had several choices – I could stay unhappily married while secretly having a relationship with The Girl. I could get divorced but choose not to pursue my relationship with The Girl. I could get divorced, have a relationship with The Girl but never tell a soul, especially not my parents

In the end, I chose to get divorced, I chose to let true love into my life, I chose to live my life with pride and dignity by coming out to my parents.

I did not make these choices easily. Most of them I made because I knew that any other choice would mean a life not worth living. But what really helped me through these times was a community of friends. Friends who supported me, my grief at the divorce (unhappy as my marriage was, I had known & loved my ex for many years), my fear of coming out. Of course it also helped that I had a very very very patient partner who tolerated my self-loathing, homophobic attitude.

And when I was past the worst phase of fear and confusion & had come out on the other side, I rued the lack of a space & community where I could read about others who had the same struggles as I had. Others with conservative South Asian parents who just could not fathom the meaning of their child being gay.

And so Gaysi Family was born.

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MJ, who I met through a common friend, and I both agreed about wanting to set up a space that we so craved.

I cannot even remember how many times I've read posts on Gaysi Family by different people and have held back tears because I've felt the same pain or nodded vigorously in agreement because I've lived the same scenario. What's amazing is that while we started this blog to help others find a community – I have found a community here that has enriched and enlightened me more than I could have ever imagined.

Gaysi Family was started to provide a voice and a safe space to desis who identify as LGBT. What began as a simple idea of sharing stories about what it meant to be gay and desi (gaysi!) has evolved into a space with multiple authors and multiple sections and traffic from around the world.

We, here at Gaysi Family, provide a forum for gaisis with something to say, whether it's personal opinions, coming out stories, poems, erotic fiction, book reviews, movie reviews, event notices or anything at all that is related to being gaysi.

We also interview published authors, activists that work towards our cause and media personalities.

Our latest initiative, 'Writer's Bloc', hopes to translate queer literature from various regional languages to English and from English to various regional languages.

(broom)

(to tell or not to tell)

(rashmi)

So, I find this Queer South Asian women's group in my town and I subscribe to their listserv. I read through their website and it quotes welcoming all self-identifying women of S Asian origin. Then, a couple weeks later an email comes through about a film event where I meet these 2 awesome ladies whom I end up hanging out with after. And I am all soooo excited to have met my first Desi Queer women in person. With my spirits up, I decide that I should go attend one of their next events.

Fast forward a few weeks...

I go to the social that coincides with the Pride festivities. I walk in and I find like 60 odd gorgeous women out there at the social. I am completely overwhelmed by the crowd and I am thinking, "Have I gone mad or what? I think I should get the hell out? What if I am not truly accepted? What if someone says something hurtful?"

Fast forward 24 hours...

People are super nice, so much that I end up hanging out at the social and then marching along with them in the dyke march, which by itself was mind-blowing. Yes, I end up carrying the banner with others.

Its all neat, but the restlessness in me keeps brewing through the evening. My dilemma is, I haven't told anyone explicitly I am trans. Not yet. Or should I? Does it even matter? I don't see that as a biggie? My trans-feministic attitude kicks in and I start playing the Devil's advocate. The other half of my brain says "hey if its not a biggie then why not just go and share it? Why you being such a wimp?" The funny part is, since everyone I spoke to was super nice, I tended to believe not everyone figured it yet or they were just too polite about it or just accepting. I prefer the last one of-course!

I know I am not embarrassed about my queerness. I am pretty much out to a lot of people that matter to me. I view my transness as just another part of who I am, rather than that being the focal point of the person who I am. (Yes it makes a

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difference if I am being intimate with someone which is a totally different topic). Ideally, I would like to be known as "R.. is a so and so person blah blah blah who lives here blah blah blah and she is fun to hang out. In the same vein, I also tend not to start conversations with what kind of work I do? While for a lot of people, their work defines them, its not so in my case. I merely look at it as a way to a comfortable life and I do not in any case would like who I am to be associated merely with what I do?

On my way back home, I keep thinking, "Am I fearful of being hurt?". "Do I fear of being ostracized by the already smaller gaysi community?" "Am I just ashamed of myself?" "Am I not being hypocritical? Am I not going into the closet by not telling anyone at a support group of all places?"

I understand intellectually that there is a point in every relationship that each of us are comfortable sharing about ourselves with others. But I still keep wondering... There is a sense of bittersweetness about the whole social. While I am still pondering about when and whom to share it with...

... Question to y'all, "Have you ever been in a similar situation? When do you think its okay to tell someone? – I am not talking about the average Jane or Joe here but rather other queer folks? Have you ever had someone tell you they were gay, and then as you get to know them they come out as trans or bi or into masochism or being poly and so on ...? Did it change the way you felt about the person- for good or bad? Did it make you feel closer or repulsive? Or was it just a '*I don't care because you are awesome*' kind of a feeling? And most importantly, will it ever change your feelings about a person if you really like them (and I presume you know what I mean) *wink*

(slow bridges)

(guest author, vivek shreya)

How am I going to tell them?

How am I going to tell them I have written **a book** about me, about us? Maybe my parents don't need to know. How would

they even find out? Aside from my dad's occasional detective time spent on my MySpace, they barely know how to use the internet. Why do I need to tell them? Is this just about seeking sanction, their blessing?

To share something so personal with everyone except with the ones who made me feels like a betrayal. So does the book itself: exposing our family, telling *their* stories, stories which aren't mine. "What happens in the home, stays in the home," my mom would warn us. Which betrayal is worse? Which betrayal weighs more?

Then there is the queer and sex content. *Hi Mom! Guess what? I wrote a book where I talk about wearing your makeup and being gay and masturba...* End scene. I came out to my mom almost a decade ago but the word *gay* seldom is said between us. Out of sight, out of mind. I am protective of her idea of me, the Perfect Son whose queerness was *just a phase*. I assume that she prefers it this way. It was a sad day when my mom was disappointed by one of her favourite American heroes, Oprah Winfrey, after watching one of her TV episodes. "Even Oprah was talking about *Lessssssbians!*" she hissed with disgust. Those are the kinds of random moments that, even in a house of love, are etched in you and get stored with dozens of other clues you subconsciously collect. Clues that act as a barometer as you negotiate coming out to your parents, whether or not to mention that your friend is actually your boyfriend or that you think Hrithik Roshan is a stud.

But the harder truth to admit is that some days I prefer it this way too. Some days it's easier not to say the word, not to have *those* conversations because they take a certain strength and courage. Maybe we would *all* have happier existences if I just didn't mention the *book*.

In June, I was in my hometown Edmonton to do a reading from *God Loves Hair*. I told my parents it was a music performance.

Where is your guitar?

Someone is lending me theirs.

Do you have your guitar picks?

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In my pocket.

Did you bring cds to sell?

They are in my bag.

Every lie, another brick upon my secret. When I got home, I surrendered and wrote the following email:

Hi Mom -

There is something that I have to tell you, that I have wanted to share with you but I have been really struggling with how.

*As you know, our stories are seldom told. I remember what it was like seeing **The Namesake** on the big screen and how powerful it was to be able to share that with you. Even though it wasn't our identical experience, that movie resonated with me (us?) in a way that no other had, because it felt deeply familiar. Watching Gogol's mom, for example, alone in her cold home after newly immigrating to a snowy America, I felt I had a tiny glimpse into how hard that must have been for both you and dad.*

I wrote God Loves Hair because I wanted to talk about what it felt like growing up as a mom-loving, god-loving, queer Indian boy in Edmonton. It is very personal and talks about the kinds of things we didn't openly speak about at home. Which is one of the main reasons why I don't know how to share it with you. I worry so much about disappointing you. But not sharing it with you is eating me on the inside. Especially because in a lot of the ways the book is a tribute to you – how thankful I am to you, how your love literally kept me alive. I survived because of you.

I thought perhaps I could share with you some of the stories as a starting place.

Your son,

VS

SENT. With eight stories from *God Loves Hair* attached.

Hours passed and regret began to feed. *This was a really REALLY bad idea.* The phone rang. My parents number blazed on the call display but I was unable to answer. This was still a conversation I didn't want to have. A couple hours

later, I nervously called home, thinking about how I was almost 30 years old and yet with my parents I was forever a child. My mom picked up and we had a conversation that is now mostly a blur:

You should never feel like you can't share something with us...

Your cousin went through a phase where she only wore boys clothing. It's normal, we all go through that...

Your book will help people just like that famous lady's book about surviving cancer...

I put down the phone. Though no longer burdened by the secret, I was still somewhat disappointed that she sounded tentative and hadn't sounded more proud. But given my parents' background and general conservatism, I knew that was the best possible response.

A couple hours later I received the following email:

darling vivek

i am sitting in front of the computer again and re-read the parts you sent.

It truly is an eye choker i am with so many tears.

I would love to read the rest,

Will wait for the rest when you think i should read it.

The illustrations are beautiful and your heartfelt experience no words can explain further.

Our blessings the book God Loves Hair reaches great heights.

Your family

Loving you unconditionally

Dad and Mom

The model we often see and hear in North America is one where children can openly talk to their parents about pretty much anything including their drug habits, their ambitions of being actors and their sex lives. Hugs are exchanged and a

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Jack Johnson song plays in the background. Or the Dr. Phil model of sitting face to face, telling each other everything. For those of us coming from different cultural backgrounds, these models, however seductive, ultimately don't exist. Since receiving this last email, I have been occasionally sending other stories from the book to my parents which has resulted in humble and honest exchanges between us. It is a slow and intense process, letting each other in when and where we can, recognizing there will always be things we keep from each other. But there is something beautiful about it too. Building our bridges slowly, story by story, conversation by conversation.

(straight but not narrow : priya)

(shri)

*An upright walk in good conduct, a straightforward perception about it,
following her progressive codes fearless of anyone in the land,
and self-acclaimed pride of knowledge about it, if these are there,
the women who are modern do not swerve, ever.*

- Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi, Legendary Tamil poet.

In the conservative lands of South India, women rarely participate in protests and marches for their own rights, let alone for the rights of other minorities. When Priya, who was in her early 20s, participated in Chennai's first LGBT pride parade held in 2009, she was marching as a straight ally supporting her gay brother Praveen. Priya marched with an arm around her brother holding a placard that said "Straight but not narrow : Proud sister of a Gay." It was not just a proud queer moment, but also a very proud feminist moment! Priya would have made the great, legendary feminist poet, Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi proud!

Although the Delhi High court decriminalized homosexuality in its historic July 2nd, 2009 judgment, it is still a huge cultural taboo in India. Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders (LGBT) are often ostracized, discriminated against and ill-

treated. Their friends and families also have to face harsh treatment most of the time. For a young woman to come out in support of LGBT rights, means a direct threat to her marriage prospects. In her Times of India interview, Priya dismisses any such fear, "I have no such worries, If people are not understanding, then I don't need them in my life."

Priya had so much fun marching. "I was very excited and happy to be part of Chennai's first pride march. I wanted to show to my brother and the rest of the world, how much I support him. I wanted to show people that simple gestures like this from family member mean a lot to our gay brothers & sons"

After Priya and Praveen's pictures were published the next day in some daily magazines, Priya had to face some negative reactions. "Some of my college mates saw it and they asked me if my brother was "like that", I curtly replied back saying yes. They didn't ask me more, because I gave them the "it's-none-of-your-business" look. But I realized even lot of educated people have no idea about homosexuality or they just think it's outright disgusting."

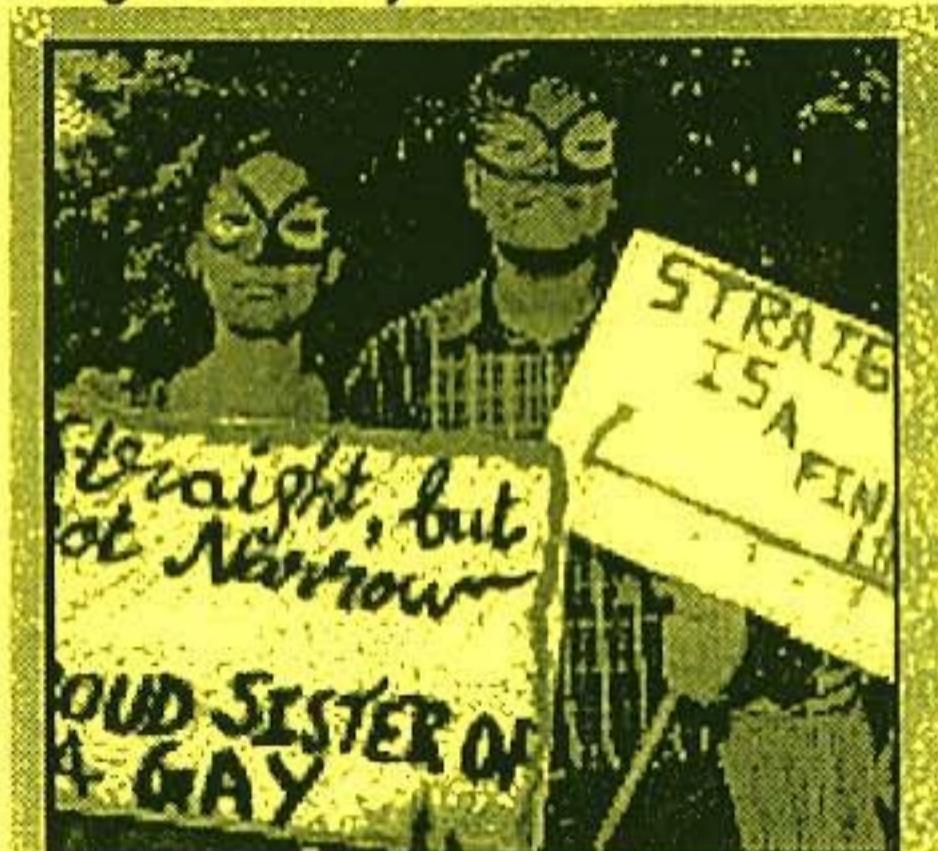
It wasn't easy for Priya to come to terms with Praveen's sexual orientation. "I had no idea what homosexuality was, so it was shocking news to me. Praveen came out to my mom a few years ago and she told me he is gay". Determined to make the 'unknown' known, Priya then spent time reading and researching sexuality. Her mother was there to answer any questions she had. "At first I thought homosexuality was changeable, but once I realized it wasn't, I was very worried that Praveen would have to be single and lonely for the rest of his life. My mom and I were two straight women who couldn't think beyond common heterosexual relationships" laughs Priya. Now Priya is looking forward to Praveen finding his own partner and vows her support "I will definitely support his pursuit of happiness."

When we asked Priya what tips she has for other siblings of LGBTs, she says "I don't know if I am qualified enough to give advice, but I'll say this: It is not easy, but we should listen to our gay siblings, because we love and care for them. With love

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comes acceptance; and with acceptance and patience comes understanding. Sexual orientation is not a choice, so please love and support your sibling regardless of what their orientation may be. You'll be surprised what joy that can bring to your family."

Image courtesy : Times of India.



(awakening moment)

(mj)

The other night a friend and I were sitting at a pub, recruiting. Yes, recruiting. We, at Gaysi have chunky expansion plans and I would advise our Team members to get with it at the earliest. Please expect The To Do List in your mail box in the next 24 hours.

So there we were showcasing our popular traits; Ruswa and her Colgate smile, whereas yours truly was almost ready to dish out her gyaan (knowledge) on how to attract Quality women & Quantity women, depending on what one is running after. (Please Note: Gaysi recruiters are selfless creatures, who stop at nothing to accomplish their goals). Needless to say, in 30 minutes, our prospect was ready to have "Gaysi" tattooed on his forehead.

Once done with all recruiting formalities and reinforcement of our motto "At Gaysi we mean business", we allowed ourselves to celebrate and bought our very young lad a couple of beers. Two pints down, we were buddies; we, the confident ones and he, the curious one. And then, Eureka! he popped a question worth mulling – "So when was your Awakening moment?"

When I look back, unlike many of my dyke friends, I can't really pin-point that dramatic awakening moment. In fact I think I skipped it altogether. None of those daunting realizations "Damn, I am Gay!" "Damn, what will Sarla Aunty think?" "Damn, I will be deep fried in Hell's gigantic black pot" "Damn! Damn! Damn!" Nope, none of that. Now this is something I am not really proud of. I feel like I may have missed something so vital in living the Queer experience.

As a 13 year old who kissed a woman for the first time and from there on, made gradual progression towards other aspects of physical intimacy, I think of my awakening experience more of an easy breezy one. The realizations here were not just hormonal, but also glittering with a certain feel good factor – "Damn, women are hot!" "Damn, women taste yummy!" "Damn, I like this!" "Damn, I want more!" "Damn! Damn! Damn!"

Even as a grown up, the realization process hasn't stopped. Every time I come out to a stranger, every time I write a post, every time I read a Queer story, even every time I flirt with a woman! – I become aware of this confident person living inside. This sexually confident woman happy to love another.

(contemporary courtesan)

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(tappy tippy)

I don't want to be your wife; lover; girlfriend; mother; best friend.

I want to be a contemporary courtesan, to be your intellectual equal, to be your skilled lover, attentive to your every need.

I want to know how your mind ticks play to your strengths and weave over your weaknesses

I want to breathe the air where you are yourself. I want to be your companion in the talkative silences.

I want all your attention and give you all of mine. I want to keep this on the edge where this relationship has no name.

I want to share stolen moments from ambitious dreams and busy schedules. I want being with you to be as effortless and as desirous as the moon rising in the sky!

I want to be a part of your world. Only a part, and not the whole. I want us to fly together and sometime disparate to conquer diverse worlds and celebrate together.

I want to share a common space; not a roof. I want us to share experiences; not merely time.

I want no one to decide the rules except the ones we make. I want to know how you feel the minute you say hello!

I want to be with you because of you, because of who I become when I am with you, and because of what you bring out in me.

I want to be with you, without artifice, without agenda, without dependence, and without financial ties.

I want to be your contemporary courtesan! and want you to return the favour...

(shri's mr. & mr. iyer)



KASI YATRA

The groom wearing a new chappal, holding an umbrella and a walking stick proceeds on his yatra to Kasi. The father of the other groom intercepts him offering his boy in marriage, bringing the grooms to Grahasthi Ashramam.



EXCHANGE OF GARLANDS

Grooms exchange garlands usually helped by their uncles lifting them bodily. The event adds fun and festivity to the occasion

THE SWING CEREMONY

The grooms sit on the swing. Straight ladies, Madisar drags and dykes display their talent in classical music, providing festivity to the atmosphere. The swing signifies the ups and downs of life.

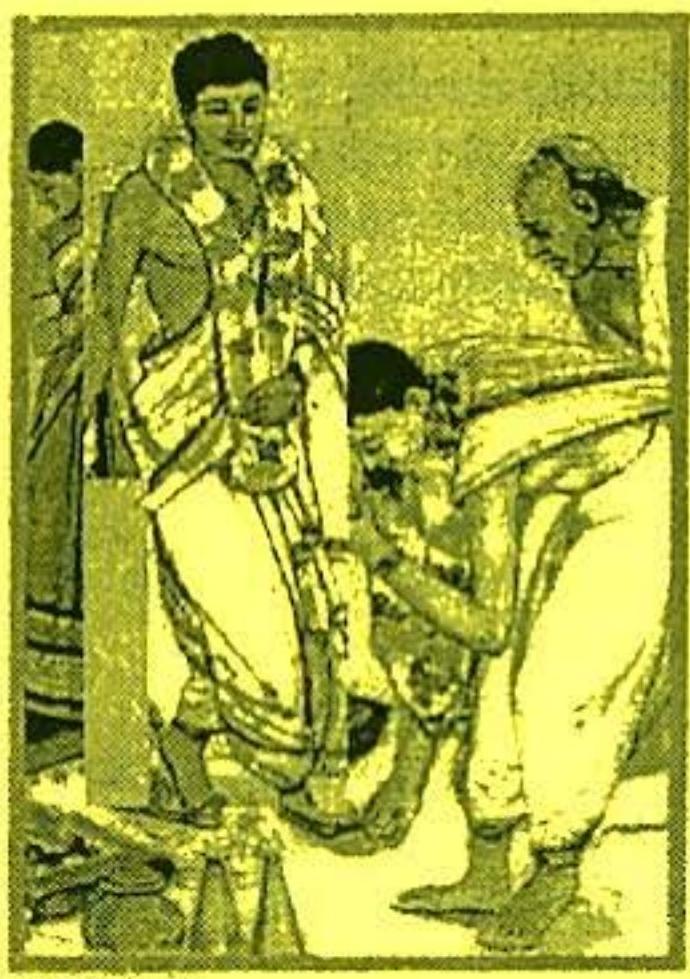


THE SWING CEREMONY

PANI GRAHANAM

Grooms hold their right hands and recite the marriage vows in four mantras. They pray Agni the god of fire, Saraswathi the goddess of knowledge, and Vayu the lord of wind for blessings, long life and congruence of mind.

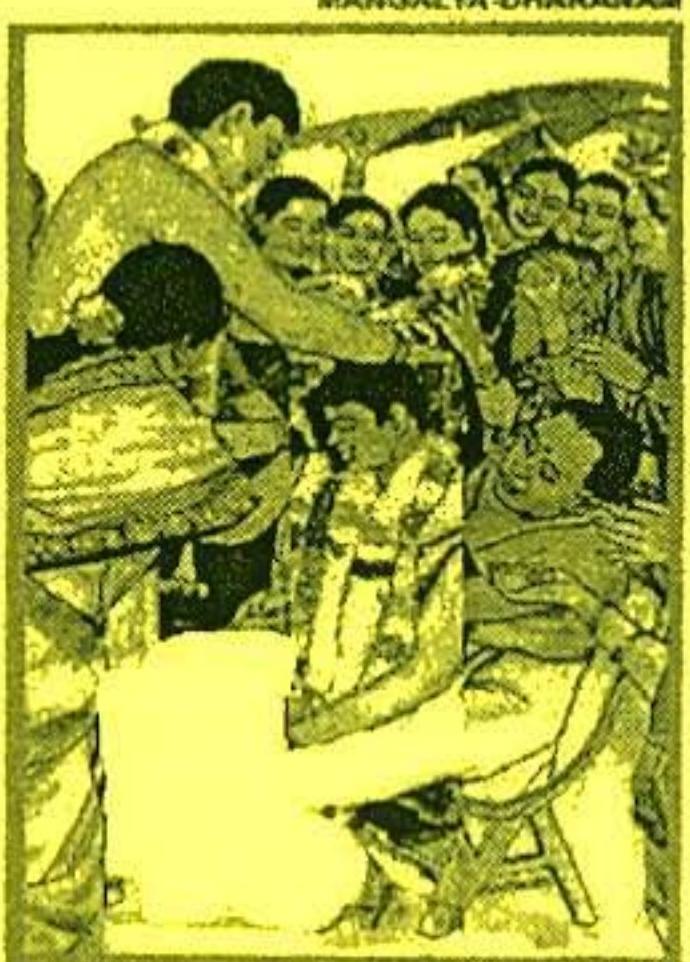
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SAPTAPADHI

SAPTAPADHI

Holding his partner's hand, the groom walks seven steps with him. This is the most important part of the marriage ceremony and only when they walk 7 steps together (i.e. perform SAPTAPADHI) is the marriage complete legally. The belief is that when one walks seven steps with another, one becomes other's friend. The mantras recited then mean: "Ye who walked seven steps with me become my companion, whereby I acquire your friendship. We shall remain together inseparable. Let us make a vow together, we shall share love, share the same food, share the strengths, share the same tastes. We shall be of one mind; we shall observe the vows together. I shall be the SAMA, you the RIG; I shall be the upper world, you the Earth; I shall be the SUKHILAM, you the holder – together we shall live, have children and other riches, come thou, O! Cute boy! ;)"



MANGALYA DHARANAM

The most precious moment in one's life. Grooms sit on their father's lap and tie around each other's neck, the Mangalya Sutra. They pray for their well being and for them to live together for 100 years.



NALANGU

The evening of the marriage day is the time to relax and play. One groom calls the other for to play, inviting him through a song. Much to the merriment of one and all gathered, there follows a list of playful items. One groom anointing the other's feet with a color paste, fanning him, showing him the mirror; breaking papad over each other's head; wrenching the betel pack from each other's hand; rolling the coconut from one to the other as in ball-play and so on. During these items, the gents sing songs poking fun at the grooms and the in-laws. These events bring out many qualities of the grooms – sporting spirit, kindness, strength, cooperative nature etc..

(musing of a lesbian mother)

(guest author, mari m)

I'm a mother, first and foremost. I live for getting up with my babies in the morning, doing the little ones' hair, and walking them to the bus stop. All day, I think of them while they're gone, and I race home to hear their stories of childhood streaming out of their mouths like a podcast.

I've got three little girls. My oldest one is a teenager now, full of spice and sass, that is the quintessential "good daughter", a perfectionist in everything she does, from singing to school to the chocolate chip cookies she makes that make everyone swoon. She's thin, built like a willow tree and she's got a voice like a crystal brook: she murmurs and babbles and swells as she tells the climax to any of her stories. My middle child is quieter; more retrospective and too laid back for your average 11 year old . She looks much younger than her age, with big black eyes that fill up her pale little triangular face, and a mass of crazy brown curls that she likes to leave down, framing her naughty grin like a lion's mane. She reads and draws quietly, but is always near. Even in her solitude, she is never really alone. And then there's my baby. My caramel colored cub. At 6, she is an inquisitive terror, questioning everything from why she has to go to bed, to why God made the sun yellow, not blue ("Wouldn't it be better blue?" she'll muse). She talks constantly to one of her sisters, to me, or to no one at all. She wakes up talking and she falls asleep talking. She's the most like me.

I'm talking about them all in the present tense, but all of this life is really past. Each of the sentences should read past imperative, as in the following: "she MADE everyone swoon", "she WOULD read and draw quietly", and, "she WOULD wake up talking". This is because it's been nine months, to the day, since I had them with me.

They've all been taken hostage, you see, by their father in a foreign land. Before you ask why he took them (we'll get to that later), consider the following questions and statements:

"Oh my God! What are you doing about it, did you talk to

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the Embassy???"

- "I can't imagine what you're feeling, is there anything you need?"
- "They'll come back, don't worry."
- "What's the next step, have you heard from the latest lawyer?"
- "No one can take from you what is yours."
- "Didn't you say your family was coming to help you?"
- "Are you planning to go there?"
- "He'll get his, in the end."
- "What were you thinking, to send them there???"
- "What's the latest on the girls?"
- "How are you surviving, I don't think I could go on."

This is the refrain of my life now, as the months go on, as my girls remain gone and lost to me and with their father that neglects them both physically and emotionally. They live alone for the most part, with a driver to take them back and forth to school, and my oldest daughter to care for them as best as a teenager can. He lives with his new wife and child in an apartment 15 minutes from the one he keeps them. There are more details, but that's basically the story. They're gone. I don't know how or when I'll see them again, and the reality of it is that I have to live with that.

All of these questions resound through the myriad voices of my well meaning friends with every meeting. And they do mean well, of course. They know me as a Mama, capital M, and some of them even used to call me that as a nickname. They frequented my home when it was full of girlish laughter and dancing, when I had parties that centered on being a family and sharing that joy with everyone I knew and cared about. I lived for my children, and everything else was secondary. The questions are natural ones, coming from caring lips, from those that would see me as I once was, a buoyant Earth Mother, with the fruits of Love gathered around me, like a Harvest Goddess. But it's Winter now. And just as Demeter lost her daughter Persephone to the Lord of

the Underworld, so have I lost mine to their father.

The most hurtful and poignant statement of all time is "You should have never let them go." And why did I, anyway? The easiest answer is because I had to. There was a verbal agreement binding me to let the girls spend all vacations with their father, who in turn was bound by legal and written court order to send them back to me, pay their tuition and maintenance, and let me care for them as only a mother could. That worked, for a year, my first in India and away from his abusive control after almost 20 years. It was our Golden Age, where we each in turn blossomed and shone like glittering stars in the night. But the harder answer is because I felt it was the right thing to do. I didn't want to deny my daughters from whatever love their father was capable of giving them, however incomplete I knew it to be. I wanted them to be as whole as they possibly could be, and that meant maintaining a tenuous relationship with their father, the man that had beaten and degraded me for all of my adult life.

It worked for a time. But after 2 trips back to their father and back again home to me, the third trip proved to be a ruse. He never had any intention of sending them home. And here we are, nine months later, and with no end in sight. Lawyers cost money that I don't have. My family in the US is busy with their own lives, and while they sympathize with me, and have plans to help me, they don't understand what went wrong in the first place. They seem to secretly wonder if I am even right to want the girls back. Maybe, they muse, the girls are better off there; he's remarried and has property and pull in his community. I come from a conservative family where marriage is forever. I tried for 20 years to ignore the beatings, the verbal barrages, but finally, I decided that living a lie was not living at all, and certainly no example to my children of what life was supposed to mean.

All of this, Dear Readers, is the answer to "why". He took them for one reason and one reason only. I am a lesbian. I am shameless about this now. After more than 10 years of blackmail and pain, I think it's about time I was who I want to be. I live openly and in harmony with a woman that answers every question I ever had about love, a woman that cherishes

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my babies as I do, a woman that has borne the brunt of many torrents and floods of sadness and rage during these last nine months. We were blessed to find each other in a world where love of any kind is not easy and certainly not lesbian love. But we stuck it out, worked together, and created a cozy home for us all.

To say my daughters loved her is an understatement. They adored her as she adored them. If Mama needed alone time (all Mamas do, occasionally), Mamasita was there to fill up the gaps. She taught them new games, helped them with their Hindi homework, giggled with them over Mama's eccentricities. Mamasita made the world lighthearted and full of games. If Mama was the glue that held it all together, Mamasita was the icing on the cake, the spark that filled our world with light. Everything I mentioned of our beautiful world included Mamasita in our life. The dancing sessions, she would videotape. The cooking sessions, she would orchestrate. The bus stops, well, we took turns with that. The hair was my domain. Mediation after the little one's thunderstorm tantrums was solely her thing. Mamasita made sure we always took the time to play.

That's the life he stole away from them and from us. This life, that they and we so desperately crave to have again, is gone for us, at least for now and the near future. Our home is quiet now without them. We were used to being greeted with shouts and fanfare, 'group and individual' hugs, as my second daughter called them. Now, the desolate silence that resounds as we open the door to our home is frightening to me. But still she's here. Still I'm here. And they are still there, but with us, deeply lodged in the crevices of our souls.

If you ask my daughters, they will tell you that Mama is waiting for us to come back to her in India, waiting with Mamasita and that they want to be there, where life was "real". They understand, each in their own ways, why going there is impossible for us. They ask me to be patient, and hold on for them.

And so I will. For all of us.

(sue me i'm a dirty bisexual)

(jane doe)

Dear Gaysia (& firangaysi), why is bisexuality such a problem?

There was a post on Gaysia a year ago, and the comments section attracted a bit of discussion about bisexuality- not very positive discussion, if I may add.

And I know that's it's probably the oldest cliché in the LGBT book, but its true- you're attracted to/fall in love with a person. Not a sex. At least that's true for a lot of people. It isn't always about escapism, or about denial, because sometimes people don't care for tags or notions.

To the straight world, bisexuals are promiscuous or commitment-phobic, or come straight out of pornos. To the gay community they're either unwilling to come out of the closet, or merely experimental. Either way, they don't fit in.

When the gay community tells straight people it's all about love & expect them to understand & be less judgmental, isn't it a bit hypocritical to call a bisexual things, or attribute his or her preferences to denial or escapism? If the Ls & the Gs are going to demand conformity (asking them to choose between being straight & gay), then the vast majority are going to ask the same of LGBT.

Just like everything else in life, there isn't always a black and white, there are a million shades of grey too. Things aren't always how we like them, nor are they always within our understanding. Which is not to say that they don't exist.

I'll speak for myself. I'm not a very girly girl, but I like girly women. The kind that has long, dark hair and wears dresses and the like, but I also like men- talk, dark, extremely masculine men. And this has been on for some years now. Which means it's not an in-between, making the transition from straight to lesbian phase. My fantasy of a threesome isn't me with two men, or with two women, my greatest fantasy is a threesome with Jennifer Beals & Sendhil Ramamurthy. And I'll be with someone I want to be with, dick or pussy. So sue me, I'm a dirty (traitorous) bisexual.

(gaysi) The Gay Desi

(one day)

(chicklet)

It is neither Christmas nor Valentine's Day. Nor is it the first day of any year. It is just one of those days. She says she wants to work on her painting and you tell her you want to go to the sea. She looks at the pending work, you give that puppy-eyed look and she smiles back which melts your heart. So, the two of you go to the sea. The evening is mellow and lazy. And you think about the lazy bed. The one totally wrapped in talcum fresh white sheets and big pillows and yellow poppies on the corner side table. Thoughts of the mattress taking the weight of your bodies and the sheets crumpling to the thought of your movements on her.

On the way to the sea, she talks about her new painting and whether to paint the thief first or the moon. She talks of her first painting and you think about the last lovemaking. She pulls you closer and tells you about her hometown. And her house, which has jasmine growing in all corners and the swing on the terrace. She talks about her sister and lemon cheesecake – her sister's great recipe. And you wonder if she resembles her mother or father perhaps. You don't want to know, for that could be scary, imagining them every time you made love to her.

On reaching the sea, you two sit on the shore. You feel like it's just the two of you alone on this planet. She shows you the pictures of her first dog, a Chihuahua and her second dog, a golden Labrador or was it her third? The first one slept with her in the blanket and the fourth loved swimming in the river that flows near her parents' house. And you imagine how delicious her hair smells this evening and remember your first dog, a Dalmatian called Tinkoo. You look around and realize the sun has set and stars are out playing. The earth is spinning beautifully on your favourite number while she is talking and you are looking, and she is looking and you are listening. And you do not think lady like. You think about taking off your clothes and hers; and swimming in the sea. You think about crossing the horizon and reaching the other side.

And then she brings you back and tells you that she wants you to read her Pablo Neruda. And you think about the poet and the words, her and the lazy bed. Every time you remember the bed; you make it fresh and white and lazy and you fall into its warmth with her, and every time you look at the garden you sprawl on the grass which is green and soft and tickles your feet and makes her laugh.

Suddenly she tells you that you resemble her first crush, her friend's younger sister. She has gone pink in her cheeks seeing the twinkle in your eye. You laugh and sing '*dekh lo humko kareeb se, aaj hum mille hai nasseb hai ...*' She kisses your cheek and says, 'You sing horrible'. You tell her you would compose a song for her, and she tells you she would make a painting of you. Together you go looking for music sheets, and the guitar, and the brushes, and the paint, and the canvas! You know it is a day for new tunes and fresh color.

On your way back you pick up a bottle of wine and she picks up tacos and cheese. Leaving the sea behind, you swing together arm in arm humming the composition, which is half done, and enjoying the painting that is etched in the moment. Alas! Love has met art; and you... have met her!

(wrath)

(queer coolie)

***This post contains references to rough sex. If you find this offensive, please do not read further.**

We were pressed against each other. Her back to my front. My nipples hard against her feverishly hot skin. I held her as she lay against me in my arms, my legs spreading hers open to allow me access to her wetness. Arching in the pleasure I was giving her. I was angry. I needed her with an intensity that I believed was the only emotion that would satiate the indescribable feeling of irritation and lust I felt for the woman I was fucking. My mouth ruthlessly sucked her neck and shoulder, speaking my words clearly. A furious and inquisitive

(gaysi) The Gay Desi

tongue sought out the saltiness of her skin, letting her know my say . My hands wandered all over her body, slick with sweat palming her hardened nipples and cupping her breasts, their insistent pressure drawing from my possessiveness. My fingers occasionally swirling in her heat only to stop as she urged herself onto them. To be impaled. I wouldn't let her. I wanted her to remember this. I wanted her crying my name in such explosive pleasure that it made me come when she did. In her lustful haze to understand that I wanted her and she wanted me and it went beyond the physical. But if our bodies were the only way we could communicate – so be it

Angry sex. Not my preference. I enjoy making love slowly and surely. Worshipping a woman's body. Indulging in foreplay with the mind. Gratifying all of the tactile senses to one's content achieved through a soulful release. But here I was – Pissed as hell. And as might be expected, so was she. This woman – *by god*, how she infuriated me. We had been arguing over wants. Yes, what she wanted and what I wanted and apparently, they didn't match up. Either that or one of us was speaking *pig latin*. A simple disagreement escalated into a yelling match. What is it with women and their lack of civility when being told off? I heard what she said, I heard it loud and clear. Somehow a demonstration of rationality and a refusal to engage in hostility is a bad idea when arguing with a hot tempered siren. It just ticks them off more. I was starting to simmer, as much as I thought we could sort this out like adults, a part of me wanted to bellow out loudly about the unfairness of all the accusations being hurled at me. But I didn't. I grew angry and that is something that doesn't happen often, if ever. I grew angry because while she stood there in her gauzy white pants and lusciously soft black sweater contemptuously screaming my lack of a million different emotions to the heavens, I still wanted her. My eyes caught the drape of cashmere over the curve of her small breasts and how they moved slightly while she was lambasting me. Her hips almost aggressively sensual with the occasional delicate hand that made its way to rest upon them.

I moved closer to her. My jaw clenched, lips pouted – a *tell sign*. I stared at her with an intensity that would scare had

they not been burning with want. She looked right back at me furiously but the frown between her brows gave away her uncertainty and...*curiosity? What was I doing?* I eventually entered her personal space. Towering over her. I placed my hand behind her head, my fingers grasping for purchase in her waves and curls. She opened her mouth .. I didn't want to hear anything more. "Shut up..." I growled and roughly covered her mouth with mine. My lips sucking and nipping hers with ardor. She opened her mouth to gasp and I took advantage of her movement to slant my mouth over hers widely, plunging my tongue into her mouth. To taste her. Shut her up. Render her incapable of feeling anything but the texture of my tongue dueling with hers in her hot wet sassy and spiteful mouth. After a split second of surprise ...She gave as good as she got.

I groaned in satisfaction. We kissed hot and hard. Stopping only to suck and bite any inch of skin we could find. My hands wandered over her back, reaching down to grasp her linen encased cheeks. I bent slightly so I could ground my hips into her, wanting us to feel the pressure of my body against her want. "Fuck" ... Almost as if on cue, the permanently playing internet radio at my place started blaring a **bizarrely trippy song**. It did nothing to quell our hormones or emotions, instead spurring us on more recklessly. Like the kitschy rhythm of the track was the soundtrack of our fucking. The mojo flowing through me allowed me to miraculously execute a move I'd only ever seen in the movies. I lifted her while she wrapped herself around me. "Do you want me ?" I asked huskily. She nibbled and bit my ear, "Yes...Fuck me".

I took her to my bed and threw her onto it. By no means gently. I quickly removed my clothes and crawled up over her, unbelievably turned on and impatiently pulling at her sweater. We kissed feverishly. Each trying to regain the upper hand on the others body. But I was taller and hence had the physical advantage which I was in no mood to relinquish. She was mine. And I was going to have her. I sat upright against the headboard and dragged her against me, refusing to let her turn around. And so began the sensual onslaught of my hands and mouth on her, hers rendered useless but to guide my angry and pleasuring touch. Every time she tried to

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close her thighs to sate her insistent need for my hand there, I spread them again... continuing to swirl, to tease. She moaned loudly. Her sassy mouth spouting two charming words in alternating regularity. "Fuck" ...Uh huh. I was doing that alright. "Baby".... I won't lie. I enjoyed the helplessness masked by the demanding nature of her sexy '*I'm-being-fucked*' voice saying this particular endearment. Yeah.

When I finally allowed my fingers bring her to orgasm, She arched and shuddered and screamed my name. My name. Me. I allowed my fingers to rest in her warmth, enjoy the slickness of her juices as she recovered. As she breathed in deeply, slack in my arms as I held her hushing into her ear –My own needs kicked into overdrive. My god, I wanted to be touched. Almost as if she sensed this, with a surprising amount of energy she pulled away from me and turned around – yanking my face to kiss me hard. When we came apart for air, I looked into her eyes and knew I was in trouble. A whole lot of trouble. She shoved me onto my back roughly.

"God...", I breathed...or not. Because let me say this – sex hath no fury like getting it from a woman thoroughly fucked.

(the learning curve)

(guest author, tejas pande)

To him, they appeared everywhere.

They frequented drawing classes, homework books, newspapers, hotel napkins, the foggy bathroom mirror, sacks of grains at the grocery shop, dirt tracks, shoe imprints, photographs of dangerous ghats in Bolivia that flooded his email inbox, strange buildings, mangoes, blood bank advertisements and so on. His arms were stiff; wrists, though, forever worming graciously.

He drew them at school, at home, on weekdays, on Sundays, at the table, under the bed, in the garden, at the theatre, in the school bus, in the car, at breakfast, at dinner. Curvaceous and angular. Starred and circled. Penciled and coloured. Large and small. Drawn and crafted.

His exam marks shone. That he was talented was undeniable.

That he drew was a paisley alone was truly worrisome. Men, women and children alike were paisleys with heads atop. His mother was distressed, sister amused and father oblivious. His school suggested seeing a learning specialist, his uncle decided to 'talk' to him. Grandmother had his *patrika* examined; at the *Shani* temple, the maid lit a *diya*.

A little trip might do him good, they all thought. One Sunday, he left for a hill station with his family. Luckily, it was raining by the time they reached the guest house. He was exuberant. His mother was drawn to tears. The city was agreed to have taken a toll on him. He sat by the window, hand stuck out, grasping the pounding rain, shrieking in glee. He sang songs of the rain with his mother, gathered rocks with his father and chased his sister along the pebbled pathway leading into the green. After breakfast one day, he took his drawing book and pencil and set out to draw a beautiful clump of flowers growing around the rear clearing of the guest house. He returned an hour later and sat on the bed, humming to himself.

As they returned, his drawings began to get increasingly absurd. They steadily lost their blithe qualities to make way for large symbols, almost occupying an A4 sheet. His father happily kept bringing discarded reams of paper from his office despite his wife's much shrill nagging. The paisley sat over contracts, deeds, emails, graphs, charts, bibliographies, notices, family photos, flight tickets, grocery bills. His fingers were tireless, his mind ever-searching.

He started sleeping with a large drawing each day as his family helplessly watched on. One morning, his grandmother could not contain her hysteria anymore and headed for the hills. "Paisley first, whores next!" Alarmed, his sister was made to share his bed in an attempt to maintain a vigil. He unabashedly continued sleeping on his side, the paper being sculpted urn-like by his softly heaving ribs.

Summer arrived and so did heat, rashes, power cuts and mangoes. The drained family took the train to see his aunt. The journey was trying. The paisleys were stocking. A sweet, unassuming man tried to engage him in conversation but was only thrusted with a handful of drawings in return. His aunt greeted them at the station to find her sister howling on

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her shoulders uncontrollably.

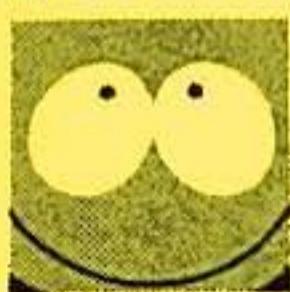
His aunt made a resolve to give him more things to think about. Each day, they opened a new volume of the *Childcraft* series and read sections aloud to each other. It was engrossing and the women and he took an instant liking to it. His aunt considered it an accomplishment. He traced the paisley on his thighs with his fingers incessantly. One evening, the children had been sent outdoors to play as the adults attempted to soothe themselves by watering the garden patch and have conversations of hypocrisy.

He came home to use the toilet. His aunt cautioned him to not take long so that he could return to his newly-made friends. As he passed the bookshelf in his cousin's room, he swiftly picked up the volume number five. His heart began to race faster. Would he get scolded for this? He flipped through the book furiously. His anxiety made his throat dry up. He felt a knot in his chest.

And then, he felt a surge of joy seeping in. The drawing on the page was so warm it made his eyes water. The opulence melted him. His mouth slightly open, he finally felt at home. A mother with an exposed breast was feeding her baby. As his eyes caressed the mother's breast, he saw the most natural paisley in it. He was trembling now. His fingers were blue and cold. He was sobbing and giggling to himself. It baffled him. His fingers traced the breasts again. Exactly like the paisley. He imagined the large voluminous bottom of the paisley akin to the *brinjal*-like shape of the breasts. Gently, he brought the book closer to his chest. Shivering, he stole a quick glance at the door. His bladder was bloating alarmingly. Gently, he lowered his shirt and replaced his nipples with hers. The baby seemed to suckle onto him most naturally. He decided instantaneously that breasts belonged on his body and so did a baby. He stood with the book to his chest in his cousin's room.

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(featured team members)



(broom) By day an anonymous cog in a large media conglomerate. By night a True Blood addict, photography loving, late night blog posting, rainbow-loving champagne socialist.



(mj) 100% shudh desi lesbian. Likes living large, and on the edge. Lives in a bubble of joy, with occasional lapses into drama queendom.



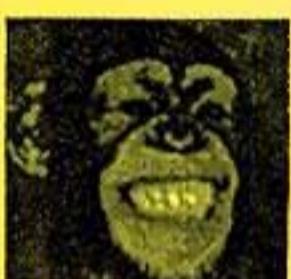
(shri) South Indian, Sambar lover, Subramanya Bharathi fan, Rebel, Bleeding heart liberal, Writer, Dreamer, Die-hard romantic and Queer.



(chicklet) Music. Photos. Theatre. Sea. Osho. Friends. Books. Dreams. Beatles. Freedom. Thoughts. Stories. Expression. Memories. Conversations. Movies. The love of my life.



(queer coolie) is the pink and cheery avatar of a single Indian lesbian in a big American city. She likes scooters, mangoes and dim-sum.



(rashmi) grew up in India and now lives in sunny California. A born hippie who now identifies as Queer, crazy, goofy, hormonal, moody, all in one single package *GRIN*



(tappy tippy) Late Bloomer, Coffee Drinker, French-Frier. Romance in her head. Erotica in her bones!



((zine compiled by) anurag) is a queer, feminist, social worker-to-be. Currently residing in the cornfields of Illinois. Fierce, emotional and reclaiming the brown-ness.

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We're always looking for new writers and contributions.
So get in touch with us and have your voice heard!

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